

Abstract 535

TITLE: New Strategies in Providing Harm Reduction Services to Homeless Adults

AUTHOR: Jones, P

ISSUE: There are up to 77, 000 homeless individuals and families in the County of Los Angeles. HIV seroprevalence rates are estimated to be 3% for the homeless population overall, but increase dramatically to 19% in the gay, and 7.2% in the bisexual, homeless community. Several persons engaged in “survival sex” to meet their basic needs for food, clothing and shelter. This practice contributes to a higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV than the rest of the county.

SETTINGS: The Skid Row area of Downtown Los Angeles is a 10-square-block radius with approximately 15,000 residences. The behavior change program is implemented in a variety of settings including substance abuse recovery programs, single occupancy hotels, life skills-building programs and shelters.

PROJECT: The Healthy Alternatives for Reducing the Risk for HIV Infection Program (HARRP) is sponsored by JWCH Institute, Inc., a community-based not-for-profit organization and is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the County of Los Angeles, Office of AIDS Programs and Policy. The program is a theory-based approach designed to reduce the risks of HIV infection. The program employs a multi-educational method of disseminating prevention information which includes small group sessions, peer educators, HIV-positive speakers who have experienced being homeless and role plays.

RESULTS: The summary of pre- and post-test scores of participants who completed the sessions indicate that the knowledge level of HIV transmission and prevention has increased. The summary of follow-up surveys completed by the participants indicates that individuals have reduced or maintained a safer level of personal risk for transmission.

LESSONS LEARNED: The findings suggest that there is need to continue providing repetitive behavior change education sessions that use innovative methods to deliver the information.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Patricia Jones

Address: JWCH Institute Inc.

1910 W. Sunset Blvd. Ste.650

Los Angeles, CA 90026

Telephone: (213) 744-3822

Fax: (213) 744-6126